

if you can find a sound moral and ethical way to help us continue our contribution to our community and our neighbors please strive for that.

Thanks for your service.

DENNIS, *Blackfoot*.

First it is nice to hear that the Senate is at least thinking about it but I have to say that if the Senate needs families to write a few paragraphs to explain what impact these conditions are placing on the American family then I am not sure the Senate is in touch with reality as they should be.

I have worked hard all my life and have provided well for my family. I am very thankful for the opportunities given me. I know that with hard work, kindness for our fellow man we will continue to do well. However, these impacts will be negative in the long run. They are putting undue stress on my family, on my life and every discussion everyday is about these prices and the affects it has on every aspect of the economy. There will be less productivity, less education, more broken families due to the financial stress and probably most important less faith in our system.

The American public has a government in place that has become so out of touch with who it represents that I am not sure anything will or can be done. There is too much greed and dishonesty in our government system and those that lead this country are in it for their own prosperity and not the prosperity and best interests of the people. I feel the liberals only want power and control. And I am not sure what the Republicans represent anymore.

These energy prices impact every aspect of our lives, security and well being. If our government will not do the right thing immediately then there will be ramifications beyond belief and for generations to come. I am sure you know this but I hope you do . . . Our forefathers would have never have let this happen. We would be totally independent of all foreign control. They would have known the liberty and safety of this country would be at jeopardy.

Best Regards,

DAVID.

Today, I was in a grocery store where the fellow in line in front of me bought a small bag of tomatoes for \$7.00. Tomatoes are not in season here, and have to be shipped from California. The clerk said we will no longer be able to buy Cyrus O'Leary pies, as the company is located in Spokane, almost 100 miles away, and they are no longer willing to deliver further than 30 miles. We are going to have to change our ways of living, buying more locally produced goods. There is great opportunity here for new local businesses. People are going to have to once again learn how to eat the food that is in season. Maybe local butcher shops will once again thrive, and be able to compete with the giant slaughter houses. None of this local economic development will happen if we once again are able to buy cheap gas.

I do not favor anything that will bring the price of gas down. Our own natural reserves of oil in the ground should be saved for future generations to be used in manufacturing and other basic industries, instead of being burned up in internal combustion machines. I agree with you wholeheartedly that we need to turn to nuclear (providing there is adequate resources of uranium) and other non oil energy sources, and end our dependence on oil. Without the pain involved in high oil prices, there will not be the will to make this difficult transition. Please stop trying to extract the last drop of oil from the ground so we can have cheap gas, and start thinking about the future.

JANET.

This hits the nail on the head, Senator. Until we cut down on the long-range use of fuels in this country for private transportation, the costs will—most likely—continue to accumulate and even accelerate.

We see it on the highway as semi after semi tools along burning more fuel than an equivalent freight train to handle the same load. Somehow we have to come to grips with this or we are going to find ourselves either walking, or starving, or both.

We see it on the highways and bi-ways of this country as 4-wheelers burn up fuel for recreation that could be put to better use. And, if you so much as suggest this might be a waste of precious resources, your political career would be in jeopardy!

I appreciate the positive steps that you have taken in regard to legislation. The solutions are going to be hard—drill for oil, conserve what we have, eliminate unnecessary trips and combine errands to save gas. And quit using gasoline for recreational uses. These are some of the first steps.

But, ultimately, we are going to have to look deeply at the problem of public transportation in this country. People are too selfish and too intent on achieving their own ends to cooperate until the situation becomes dire.

But I am sure you will agree that this attitude of "you will have to pry my dead hands off the steering wheel (or handlebars) to get me to stop my wasteful practices" will actually only cease when we run out of oil or can no longer afford it. And that will be too late to do anyone any good.

Limited public transportation options mean that many of us do not have any choice but to keep driving and paying those ever-increasing prices for fuel

RAY.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL ERIC J. WILBUR

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, it is my honor to pay tribute today to COL Eric J. Wilbur, Vice Commander of the 37th Training Wing at Lockland Air Force Base. On February 1, 2009, Colonel Wilbur will retire after a distinguished 20-year military career in which he has honorably and faithfully served his country. Among many other awards, Colonel Wilbur has been decorated with the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, and the Defense Meritorious Service Award.

I have always considered it a privilege to highlight the distinguished service of those men and women serving in the military, especially when they have Iowa ties. As an Iowa native and graduate of Iowa State University, I am confident that Colonel Wilbur retires not only with the esteem and admiration of his peers, subordinates, and country but also his hometown of West Union, IA, and all Iowans.

Through his distinguished career, Colonel Wilbur has been a noteworthy example of the definition of loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice. Today I would like to extend my personal thanks to Colonel Wilbur for faithfully serving his country with excellence, as well as my congratulations on his much deserved retirement. Men and women such as Colonel Wilbur deserve to be recognized for their service and patriotism.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING LAURA SANDERS

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I congratulate Ms. Laura Sanders as Kentucky's 2008 No Child Left Behind American Star of Teaching. Initiated in 2004, the American Starts of Teaching is part of the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative. By offering regional and district workshops, roundtables for teachers and principals, and digital learning, the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative allows some of our nation's best teachers to share strategies to raise student achievement and inform teachers of successful research-based practices. Each year, over one million, students are taught by a teacher who participated in the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative.

Ms. Sanders, a kindergarten teacher at Cumberland Trace Elementary School in Bowling Green, KY, has been recognized as one of Kentucky's top teachers. She developed teaching practices in her classroom along with research-based materials that have helped her students to consistently make clear improvements. Over the past 2 years, her students' reading scores have gone from the 50th percentile in the fall to over the 85th and 91st percentile the following spring. Ms. Sanders' ability to assess the individual needs of each student has enabled her to ensure that every child is working at an appropriate pace and level. Having already been a recipient of numerous awards for her contribution to education, her work is widely recognized.

I am proud to recognize Ms. Sanders for her ability to effectively challenge students at Cumberland Trace Elementary School, while at the same time sharing her techniques with other teachers—making a difference in the lives of students. Her work is an inspiration to the citizens of Kentucky and to teachers everywhere. I look forward to seeing all that she will accomplish in the future.●

HONORING THE HEALTH OCCUPATION STUDENTS OF AMERICA

• Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the Health Occupation Students of America, HOSA, for their accomplishments over the past 32 years. Composed of 100,000 students in nearly 3,000 chapters across the Nation, HOSA is providing the knowledge, skills and opportunity for secondary and postsecondary students to enter the health care workforce. Through health science curricula, personal development exercises, practical work in the health care field and medical competitions at the local and national levels, HOSA Advisors and students prepare a healthcare workforce not only to serve but also to lead our country.

Now more than ever, we need organizations like HOSA to address critical

shortages in the health care industry. Occupational programs in our high schools offer training for young students and often help them find a rewarding career path. Programs like HOSA direct students to worthwhile vocations while also leading the effort to stimulate industry and job growth.

The American healthcare system faces myriad, complex challenges: rising prescription drug costs, a lack of stable insurance coverage, and a medical bureaucracy that is increasingly difficult to navigate. Qualified healthcare professionals should not be one of them. HOSA has found a way to combine two very important needs in our economy: an educated workforce and competent health care professionals.

I am proud that Texas is home to HOSA National Headquarters and to 491 chapters, the most of any State in the Nation. HOSA is helping build a pipeline of skilled health care workers to ensure that health care in the United States remains a model of professionalism, compassion, and innovation to the world. I commend these talented and ambitious young men and women for their dedication both to the health care profession and to our Nation.●

REMEMBERING DON HASKINS

● Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Don Haskins, a great Texan, legendary basketball coach, and remarkable man who passed away earlier this week at his home in El Paso.

Haskins, who started his career coaching small-town high school basketball teams, served as the head coach at Texas Western College, now the University of Texas at El Paso, UTEP, from 1961 to 1999. His decision to “put my five best guys on the court” in the 1966 NCAA national championship game against the Kentucky Wildcats is now widely regarded as a catalyst for racial integration in college sports. The Texas Western Miners, with an all-Black starting lineup, beat the Wildcats 72–65. Their inspiring story is told in the film, “Glory Road,” and the book of the same name.

Over his long career, Coach Haskins compiled a 719–353 record and earned a place in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1997 and the Texas Sports Hall of Fame in 1987. Over the years, he turned down lucrative job offers in order to stay at UTEP. He retired in 1999 with the fourth best record in history that included winning seven Western Athletic Conference, WAC, championships and four WAC tournament titles.

While Coach Haskins was known for his tough and competitive spirit, he is also remembered for his selfless acts of kindness.

According to an Associated Press report, “USC coach Tim Floyd, a former Haskins assistant, said he once got a call from the mayor of Van Horn, a

small town about 120 miles east of El Paso, to thank Haskins for giving a ride to a family of five stranded along the highway.

“He’d been coyote hunting and saw a station wagon broken down,” Floyd recalled this week. “He put them (the family) in his truck, drove them to El Paso, put them up in a hotel for two nights, and gave them \$1,000.”

“The family drove to Los Angeles after Haskins also helped get their car repaired. The coach never told anyone about it, not even his wife, according to Floyd.

“Floyd said he never told the story before, mostly because Haskins wouldn’t have wanted anyone to know.

“I’m only telling it now because he’s gone,” Floyd said. “I want people to know.”

In deciding to devote the best years of his life and career to the people of Texas, Coach Haskins built a legacy that will continue to inspire generations. I join with all Texans as we mourn his passing and extend our deepest condolences to his family.●

COMMENDING THE IDAHO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD UNIT

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in early August, I was informed that an Idaho Army National Guard Unit from eastern Idaho was awarded one of the U.S. Army’s highest commendations, the Meritorious Unit Commendation. The First Battalion, 148th Field Artillery Unit based in Pocatello served as part of the Idaho Army National Guard’s 116th Cavalry Brigade combat team in 2004 and 2005 in Iraq. Although part of a combat brigade, these citizen soldiers are doctors, dentists, electricians, lawyers, and other occupations as Idaho civilians. BG Alay Gayhart, Assistant Adjutant Army General for the Idaho Army National Guard, has rightly noted that these men and women utilized their civilian occupational skills in Iraq to help restore civic and governmental services to the country. I am honored to call myself a fellow Idahoan of these brave men and women, some of whom I had the pleasure of meeting prior to their deployment when they were at Fort Bliss, TX, at the end of the summer in 2004. I congratulate them on their professionalism, commitment to our mission, and am happy for their safe return to family and friends. I also keep the families and friends of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in prayer as they continue on without their loved ones.

Idaho has a proud history of military service. Her sons and daughters have been serving our Nation in uniform far from home since the days of the Spanish American War in the early 20th century. The deployment of the 116th Cavalry Brigade combat team from 2004 to 2005 was the largest deployment of the Idaho Army National Guard in history.

The Meritorious Unit Commendation is awarded to military commands that

display exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service, heroic deed, or valorous actions. The unit was recommended for the award by the U.S. Army’s higher headquarters and was selected by the Pentagon for the commendations.●

DENISON COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students’ test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes, today, to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Denison Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Denison Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$904,200 which it used to help with renovations at the elementary school including the installation of air conditioning. The district also received a 2005 construction grant to help build a new middle school and make renovations at the former middle school. This school is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves.

Excellent new schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Denison Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the Board of Education, president Rod Bradley, vice president Brenda Martens, Mark Johnson, Kris Rowedder and Les Lewis and former board member Craig Dozark. I would also like to recognize superintendent Michael Pardun, former superintendent Bill Wright, business manager Larry Struck and the co-chairs of the Vote Yes Committee, Dr. Scott Bowker and Chad Langenfeld.